



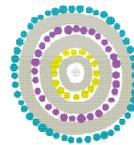
Annual Review

2022-2023

wellways

Acknowledgement of Country

Wellways acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pays respect to their Elders past and present.



Our Inclusion Commitment

We are committed to inclusive communities, workplaces, policies and services for people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.



Overview

The past twelve months have continued to lead to growth and new opportunities for partnerships and service delivery. We have expanded our leadership role in advocacy and mental health reform, and we have worked hard to become an even more attractive employer of choice.

However, Wellways does not operate outside of local, national or international events. With conflicts erupting, natural disasters striking, tragedies affecting local communities, and inflation and other economic woes returning, it was also a year to check in on colleagues, friends, and family.

The event that affected almost every aspect of work at Wellways was the lead-up to the historic Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Agreeing on a statement was challenging for us as a diverse organisation; there were different opinions in our First Nations caucus, just as in Indigenous communities around the country.

It was a challenging time for all of us, particularly for our Indigenous colleagues and participants and their families. And it is important to acknowledge their openness, sincerity, and resilience. Nevertheless, Wellways can be proud that we can be honest with each other and have robust conversations in line with our values while actively listening. It is these conversations that lead to better outcomes for us all.

More challenging conversations will be had once our new Lived and Living Experience Authority is established, an industry-first initiative at the highest level of governance that will challenge our Board and put Lived Experience at the centre of every decision we make.

In addition to the increase of Lived Experience representatives, we have completed the two-year journey toward our new Strategic Plan that will be the compass for us as an organisation and every team member until 2027. The Strategic Plan is led by our Vision, Purpose and Values.



Michael Gorton AM, Board Chair and Laura Collister, CEO.

People and Culture

Following the turbulent COVID years, our team is adapting to the post-pandemic work environment. We continue to support flexible arrangements where possible and we enjoy seeing people return to the office, strengthening connection and cross-team collaboration. Our ability to be flexible and maintaining quality service delivery sees us as a preferred service provider and an attractive employer across the sector.

We successfully integrated Workday and our payroll system, further improving our payroll processing, and introduced additional employee benefits including Wellways Paid Parental & Partner leave, which dozens of team members have already accessed.

Our priority to strengthen the capability of our workforce continues and demonstrated through our new Leadership Development Program and Performance and Learning Development Framework, setting clear career objectives for everyone at Wellways, and directly linking each person's performance to our 4 Goals of the Strategic Plan.

Who we are

close to **1900** employees

63% are part-time

37% are full-time

1347 employees are female

446 employees are male

12 employees are non-binary

52 people at Wellways are Indigenous



Wellways has increased the number of Lived Experience team members across all services.

Lived Experience

The voices of people with Lived and Living Experience are at the centre of mental health reform. Over the past year, Wellways has continued to embed these voices across the organisation, which includes coproduction and consultation on many levels. Our teams and participants are now supported by more designated Lived Experience roles than ever before, and we are proud to confirm that their numbers will continue to grow in coming years.

One way of increasing our designated roles is through our successful Lived Experience Cadet Program, which has produced six proud graduates in its inaugural year, followed by many more applications the following year. While the cadet program plays a role at the beginning of people's careers in community mental health, establishing the Lived and Living Experience Authority will shake up our governance at the highest level.



The Authority is an industry-first and critical to achieving change. The Authority will have the power to impact, at the governance and executive level, organisational values and ways of thinking, strategic directions and business priorities, and how it does business. With recruitment for the positions on the Authority commencing in 2023, we expect that our Board will be challenged by and held to account by this new body, changing Wellways for the better.



The opening of the Frankston Local was celebrated in true community spirit.



Wellways operates from around 100 sites with a growing workforce of close to 1900 people.

Mental Health Reform and Growth

Earlier in the year, there were mild setbacks on the way to reform when vital services in Victoria were suddenly cut after receiving continuous funding through the Mutual Support and Self-Help program. While the safety and wellbeing of participants were prioritised, we also looked after the affected staff. We managed to transition a significant number of them into alternative roles, some arising from our growth coming out of the Mental Health Reform.

After winning two tenders as lead and one as partner for the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, we are proud to confirm that we have established services within months of winning the contract, followed by the official openings of the locations to the public in Frankston, Benalla, Wangaratta, and Mansfield.

Later in the year, we also received the incredible news that Wellways has also been successful in winning tenders to lead four additional Local Services – and we will also be able to provide services for people caring for loved ones living with mental health challenges in two new regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centres – all of which are at the very centre of Mental Health Reform.

Simultaneously, we have also grown in New South Wales and Queensland. We have successfully established a Psychosocial Support Program on the North Coast, where we are now also a consortia partner of the Healthy Hub. Across the border in Queensland, we have been given the opportunity to make a difference to the local communities in Mackay and Townsville by leading the development and implementation of suicide prevention community-based education, awareness raising and training.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centres



Wellways leads two Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centres in Victoria in partnership with local providers. They provide information, resources, and support to family members and carers of people living with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

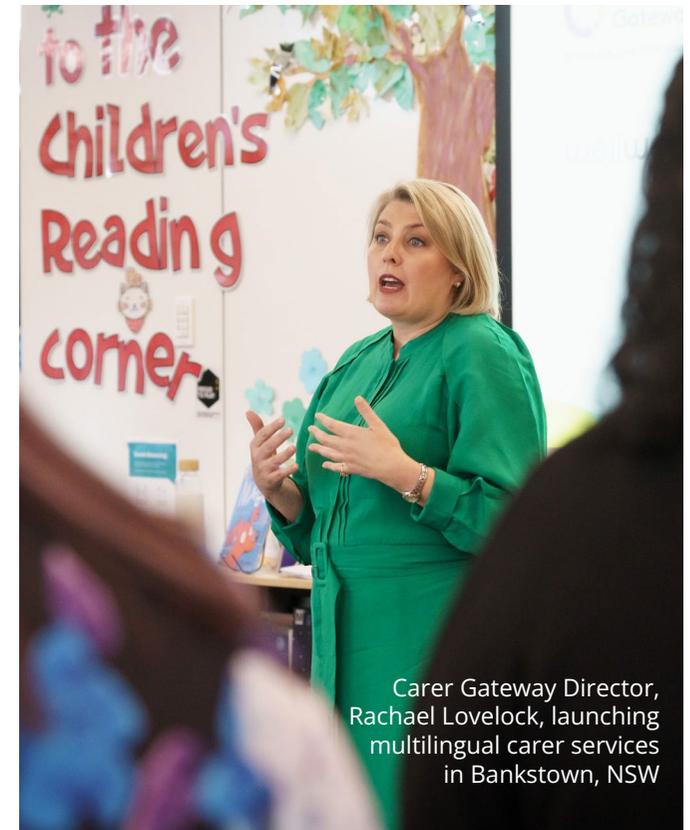
The Connect Centres were co-designed and are fully staffed by Lived Experience team members, in line with the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act (2022).

Carer Gateway

Wellways Carer Gateway services in Queensland and parts of New South Wales have been extended until 2026. This sign of trust and confidence by the Federal Government in Wellways does not only mean secure employment but also continued carer support for thousands of people and a continued, strategic rollout of our services.

While the average registered carer is female, lives in a metropolitan area and is between the ages of 50 and 64, we have focused increasingly on reaching carers outside of this demographic. This includes people living in remote areas, males, First Nations carers and migrant communities. Our first action has always been collaborating closely with consortia and community partners. These close ties result in us participating in the Young Carers Festival on the Gold Coast (organised by Little Dreamers), celebrating carers at a Gala Dinner alongside Carers Queensland and ARAFMI, and significantly supporting the Carers Foundation with their marketing efforts.

We have also diversified our workforce by employing more multilingual counsellors and carer coaches who can provide culturally appropriate services, and we are exploring a First Nations trainee program. To communicate the extended range of services, we have captured and shared carer stories in a variety of languages, such as Vietnamese, Arabic and Mandarin. Excitingly, we have also launched 'Tune in to care', a new podcast where carers sit behind the mic to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences alongside one of our peer support workers.



Carer Gateway Director,
Rachael Lovelock, launching
multilingual carer services
in Bankstown, NSW



Free support for carers

No matter what your
caring role looks like,
Carer Gateway is here
to help.

**Call us for a chat
on 1800 422 737**

Reconciliation

The Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice has led to many conversations across Wellways. Our Board met with our First Nations Caucus to discuss how to address best the question posed by the referendum and how to support team members and their loved ones through this challenging time.

The in-depth conversations have led to a shared statement and the commitment that we at Wellways will now, more than ever, be determined and steadfast in our commitment to walk with First Nations people on a journey to a fair and just future.

2023 also marked the year of the inaugural First Nations Retreat on Darkinoong Country in Wollombi, NSW. Organised by Reconciliation Action Plan Officer Jaime-Lee Lalic, the retreat created the opportunity for attendees to explore their culture, share stories, and get to know each other better.



Graeme is a member of the First Nations Caucus and lives on Dharawal, Darug lands and works as a Peer Facilitator.

Quality and Safety

The Quality team has continued to progress projects and initiatives that support colleagues in participant-facing roles to do respectful, effective work. The team's new structure and central role have made a significant contribution toward two successful accreditation cycles in December 2022 and May 2023.

Other milestones are the support of several tools for service delivery, including the organisation-wide Consent Agreement and the new suite of CDS tools and forms. Work will also commence around Risk Assessment on an organisational scale and a comprehensive Wellbeing Plan.

The Critical Incident Response project has commenced to help us respond proactively and supportively in crisis, as well as work around Restrictive Practice and Clinical Training Support and Oversight. As a direct response to team members' support requests, we have focused on developing Child Safety Training that will soon become mandatory for all Wellways employees. This includes guidance on managing and responding to disclosures of child abuse.

These initiatives aim to embed a Quality culture in the hearts and minds of all Wellways staff.



Salin Reji, Compliance Lead in the Quality team

Advocacy

Wellways advocacy engages directly with community, government, and peak bodies to influence attitudes, decision making and policy, and we have supported our people to speak up and challenge attitudes and practices that lead to exclusion and impact mental health.

We have developed an Advocacy Strategy that underpins health policy, planning, service delivery and systems. The strategy was co-developed and has collaboratively progressed in the past 12 months.

We have led and contributed to more than ten inquiries and submissions about various issues closely aligned with our vision, purpose, and values. We have also directly contacted the media and decision-makers while actively lobbying governments through peak bodies and our role in the Australian Psychosocial Alliance.

This year's Woodcock Public Lecture sparked reflective conversations about listening and the effectiveness of our current approaches to dealing with distress, with discussions continuing online, leading to more than 1500 people streaming the lecture.



The 2023 Wellways Public Lecture led to many conversations about the way we deal with people experiencing distress, and how to listen to them.

Wellways in the News



The strength of vulnerability in mental illness workforce

Larrie Yindale
 WHEN Corey Lamb was a patient in an ACT residential mental health facility at age 16, he never imagined they would one day hire him because of that experience.

A 2022 Prime Minister and Cabinet survey estimated a million Australians had lived stigma or discrimination because of mental illness in the year before.

But in Mr Lamb's job, his lived experience of mental illness is not just an advantage but a requirement. For the last decade, Mr Lamb has been a peer worker at an Adult Day Down Step by facility, helping guide patients through recovery.

"The simple phrase 'I got a bit of, you just get it Corey,' Peer workers. They just get it. They've been through it. Some of them are still going through it," he said.

Paul Thompson first experienced mental health struggles after being recruited from his "stable" banking job. The late in the redundancy cycle led to a period of mental health, spending Mr Thompson's interest in the sector. Struggling to find work be-



Peer mental health workers Corey Lamb (left) and Paul Thompson (right). Pictures by Eliza Kurtz

cause of his age, he received a Commonwealth funded ACT Health scholarship allowing people with lived experience to study a certificate IV in mental health peer work. He helps NDIS clients maintain good mental health and observes their behaviours as well they need further interventions.

"They trust me when I'm transparent about my mental health journey," he said. "Particularly an older client that might have a mental health condition, I can talk about my own experience and how I was able to work through the issues."

Peer support workers provide more than just empathy, but a professional understanding of how the health system works. ACT Health's new lived experience director, Bradley Fodenstein, said, "They're taking up that interpersonal support, walking alongside, but they're also drawing on systemic understanding," he said.

ACT Health is committed to incorporating people who have - or still do experience mental illness in all levels of the organization, ACT's on-call generalist for mental health and wellbeing, Dr Elizabeth Moore, said.

"Mental illness itself is not a barrier to being a productive member of society, and it can actually help in leading change," she said.

Applications for the 2023 certificate IV in mental health peer work scholarship have closed. #Lifeline 13 11 14 #ReportPlus 2022-12-06/08

Mental health support service opens

A NEW mental health support facility has opened in the centre of Frankston.

Frankston Mental Health and Wellbeing Local opened its doors on 9 November. Services at the centre are free and do not require a referral from a doctor.

The mental health support centres are targeted towards people aged 26

Health. It is part of the state government's plans to tackle mental health.

The new centre is now open on the ground floor of 454 Nepean Highway in Frankston. Walk-ins are welcome or people can call 1800 000 525 to access assistance.

In an emergency contact 000 or Lifeline at 13 11 14

and above. The facility will offer services by Wellways in partnership with Mentis Assist and Peninsula



FRANKSTON Mental Health and Wellbeing Local general manager Cat Hunt (left) with representatives from the Department of Health. Picture: Supplied



WELLWAYS art sessions help members use creative parts of the brain to change focus from negative thoughts to positive. (From left) Wellways peer team leader, Kelly Marson, with clients Carol Fryle and Corey Webster, and peer support worker, Brownyn Margarets, at the art group that's held each Wednesday at the Maryknoll Centre on Lonsdale Street, Hamilton. Photo: GLENN GUY

Finances

Wellways reported a surplus for the financial year ended 30 June 2023 of \$4,534,433 from revenue of \$175 million. Net assets increased to \$16.6 million in 2023 from \$12.1 million in 2022.

Wellways offers a wide range of services designed to support people affected by mental health challenges or disability, as well as their families, friends and carers. Services include, amongst others:

- Mental health and wellbeing programs;
- NDIS, iCare and other insurance support;
- Carer and family support services;
- Suicide prevention and recovery services;
- Residential rehabilitation support;
- Brief therapies;
- Youth services; and
- Housing and homelessness

Wellways services are principally provided by its dedicated and committed staff and our partners. Our people are Wellways' most important asset, accounting for approximately 76% of total expenditure. Direct participant expenses are approximately 9%, with 15% for support and corporate costs.



David Gerrard joined Wellways as Chief Financial Officer in 2023.

About Us

Wellways is a leading mental health, disability, and carer services provider. We support people's social, emotional, and physical wellbeing through community-based services.

Lived experience and partnership are central to our work and vision of contributing to an inclusive community where everyone can imagine and achieve their hopes and potential.

Wellways is a registered charity with a proud 45-year history of listening to the people we support and standing up for what we believe in.

Our vision: An inclusive community where everyone can imagine and achieve their hopes and potential.

Our purpose: We work with individuals, families, and communities to build social, emotional, and physical wellbeing.



We invest in our people so they can deliver much-needed services in community.



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